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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/663,370	09/15/2003	Joerg Beringer	09282.0016-00	1630
66568 7590 12/16/2008 SAP / FINNEGAN, HENDERSON LLP 901 NEW YORK AVENUE, NW WASHINGTON, DC 20001-4413				
EXAMINER MANSFIELD, THOMAS L				
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
3624				
MAIL DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
12/16/2008		PAPER		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/663,370

Applicant(s)

BERINGER, JOERG

Examiner

THOMAS MANSFIELD

Art Unit

3624

Period for Reply -- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 09 September 2008.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 7-19 and 33-36 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 7-19, 33-36 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/S508)
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____
- Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____

DETAILED ACTION

1. This Final Office action is in reply to the response to Office Action filed on 9 September 2008.
2. Claims 7-19 and 33 have been amended.
3. Claims 7-19 and 33-36 are currently pending and have been examined.

Response to Amendment

4. The rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph in the previous office action for Claims 8-19 as having lack of antecedent basis is withdrawn in response to Applicant's amendment to Claims 8-19.
5. The rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 101 in the previous office action for Claims 7-19 as being non-statutory for not being tied to another statutory class is maintained. Although the Applicant has amended the preamble of Claims 7-19 to recite the limitation, "*a computer-implemented method*", the body of Claim 7 does not recite how the method is computer-implemented. Therefore, the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 101 is maintained and further explained in detail below.

Response to Arguments

6. Applicant's arguments filed 9 September 2008 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.
7. Applicant submits that Dalby et al. (Dalby) (U.S. 7,133,901) does not teach or suggest in amended Claim 7: (1) receiving a characteristic identifying a first subgroup of a selected participants in an enterprise, the characteristic hard-coded into a set of machine-readable instruction for segmenting communication recipients [see Remarks under Section III].

8. With regard to argument (1), the Examiner respectfully disagrees. Dalby teaches *receiving a characteristic ("role") identifying a first subgroup of selected participants* (individual using user module, recipient, system administrator, employee, first group of matched recipients) *in an enterprise (community), the characteristic hard-coded into a set of machine-readable instructions for segmenting communication recipients* (The external repository 204 can store different typed of data and information within a database, Such database can include programmable ROM, CD-ROM, EEPROM, other modular or fixed memory, or the like for storing the information and data, Stored within each user account is the data or information specific to the particular user [emphasis added]) (see at least column 7, lines 55-66, column 8, lines 62-66, column 9, line 42 through column 10, line 26 and column column 12, line 64 through column 13, line 1).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

9. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

10. Claims 7-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as being directed to non-statutory subject matter because they fail to meet the legal requirements of a 'process or method'. The first step in determining whether a claim recites patent eligible subject matter is to determine whether the claim falls within one of the four statutory categories of invention recited in 35 U.S.C. § 101: a process, machine, manufacture and composition of matter. The latter three categories define "things" or "products," while a "process" consists of a series of steps or acts to be performed. For the purposes of § 101, federal case precedent has given a "process" a specialized, and limited meaning. *Diamond v. Diehr*, 450 U.S. 175, 184 (1981); *Parker v. Flook*, 437 U.S. 584, 588 n.9 (1978); *Gottschalk v. Benson*, 409 U.S. 63, 70 (1972); *Cochrane v. Deener*, 94 U.S. 780,787-88 (1876). A § 101 process must either (1) be tied to another statutory class (such as a particular

apparatus) or (2) transform underlying subject matter (such as an article or materials) to a different state or thing. With respect to (1), as illustrated by Benson, the use of a specific machine or transformation of an article must impose meaningful limits on the claim's scope to impart patent-eligibility. See Benson, 409 U.S. at 71-72. With respect to (2), the involvement of the machine or transformation in the claimed process must not merely be insignificant extra-solution activity. See Flook, 437 U.S. at 590. If neither of these requirements is met by the claim, the method is not a patent eligible process under § 101. Here, Claim 7 is merely receiving and managing characteristics (data). These process steps are not tied to another statutory class, nor is there a transformation of the data pertinent to the claim. Applicant's recitation of a computer-implemented method is considered nominal at least because it is in the preamble and not in the body of the claim. Nor is there explicit recitation of structure in the body of the claims. Thus, the methods of claims 7-19 are not patent eligible processes under § 101. An example of a statutory method claim might be: *"A computer-implemented method comprising: a server system coupled to a database and in communication with a client system and having a plurality of users, the server associated with the..."*. Therefore, Claims 7-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as not being properly tied to a statutory class.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

11. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

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12. Claims 7-19 and 33-36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Dalby et al. (Dalby) (U.S. 7,133,901).

With regard to Claims 7 and 33, Dalby teaches:

- *receiving a characteristic ("role") identifying a first subgroup of selected participants (individual using user module, recipient, system administrator, employee, first group of matched recipients) in an enterprise (community), the characteristic hard-coded into a set of machine-readable instructions for segmenting communication recipients* (The external repository 204 can store different typed of data and information within a database, Such database can include programmable ROM, CD-ROM, EEPROM, other modular or fixed memory, or the like for storing the information and data, Stored within each user account is the data or information specific to the particular user) (see at least column 7, lines 55-66, column 8, lines 62-66, column 9, line 42 through column 10, line 26 and column column 12, line 64 through column 13, line 1).
- *receiving a specification (academic specific attributes) of the characteristic, the specification delineating a second subgroup of participants (gender, grade-point average, full-time or part-time, second matched group) within the first subgroup, the specification added to the set of machine-readable instructions* (see at least column 10, lines 14-26 and column 13, lines 1-6).
- *managing communications with the second subgroup based upon the characteristic and the specification of the characteristic* (communicate with integration module 320 to generate an announcement to be delivered to a specific recipient or group of recipients) (see at least column 10, lines 27-47).

With regard to Claim 8, Dalby teaches *wherein receiving the specification of the characteristic comprises receiving the specification of the characteristic, the specification assigned to the characteristic to customize the set of machine-readable instructions to the enterprise* (target criteria can be one or more attributes selected from those contained or included in the user or recipient's account) (see at least column 12, lines 33-56).

With regard to Claim 9, Dalby teaches *wherein receiving the specification of the characteristic comprises receiving a specification particular to the characteristic* (Operators can be used to combine the defined criteria to form the target criteria attribute) (see at least column 12, line 57 through column 13, line 6).

With regard to Claim 10, Dalby teaches *wherein receiving the characteristic identifying the first subgroup comprises receiving a domain identifying the first subgroup based on the nature and type of the first subgroup's participation in the enterprise* (defines which recipient or groups of recipients are to receive the announcement, position within the organization, department, job description) (see at least column 12, lines 33-56).

With regard to Claim 11, Dalby teaches *wherein receiving the characteristic identifying the first subgroup comprises receiving a selection from amongst a collection of potential characteristics* (compared against a database of recipient attributes) (see at least column 12, lines 66-67).

With regard to Claim 12, Dalby teaches *further comprising presenting an inventory of specifications of the characteristic to a participant* (An individual through a graphical user interface creates this target criteria attribute from selectable target criteria) (see at least column 12, lines 33-49).

With regard to Claim 13, Dalby teaches *associating a plurality of participant characteristics with each of a plurality of participants in the enterprise, subgroups of the plurality of participants sharing common characteristics* (continues until the nth criterion is searched and an nth matched group is defined) (see at least column 13, lines 2-5).

With regard to Claim 14, Dalby teaches *wherein associating the plurality of participant characteristics with each of the plurality of participants comprises associating a plurality of attribute values with each of the plurality of participants* (continues until the nth criterion is searched and an nth matched group is defined) (see at least column 13, lines 2-5).

With regard to Claim 15, Dalby teaches *wherein managing communications comprises establishing a contact list of the participants in the second subgroup* (potential recipient lists and associated attributes) (see at least column 14, lines 53-65).

With regard to Claim 16 Dalby teaches *wherein establishing the contact list comprises dynamically establishing the contact list for a particular message* (message module 324 can either return a list of potential matches to administrator 310) (see at least column 15, lines 53-62).

With regard to Claim 17, Dalby teaches *receiving a border* (nth criterion) *identifying a third subgroup of the second subgroup of selected participants, the border drawn from a second characteristic hard-coded into a set of machine-readable instructions* (see at least column 13, lines 2-5).

With regard to Claim 18, Dalby teaches *identifying managed communications by one or more of the characteristic and the specification of the characteristic rather than the border* (the manner by which the announcement can be delivered) (see at least column 13, lines 52-67).

With regard to Claim 19, Dalby teaches:

- *receiving a role of a participant within the second subgroup* (see at least column 10, lines 6-13)
- *excluding the participant from communications within the second subgroup based on the role* (targeting criteria defining the recipient or group of recipients to receive the announcements) (see at least column 10, lines 36-47).

With regard to Claim 34, Dalby teaches *wherein the participant description database (database 306) includes a participant object identifying a particular participant ("role") and describing the particular participant's participation* (academic specific attribute) in an enterprise (see at least column 9, line 64 through column 10, line 26).

With regard to Claim 35, Dalby teaches *wherein the participant object includes information describing a qualification* (group memberships, academic major and minor, roles) *of the particular participant* (see at least column 10, lines 14-26).

With regard to Claim 36, Dalby teaches *wherein the data processing system (community information system 300) is also configured to perform activities including receiving the specification that is particular to the characteristic* (storing information) (see at least column 9, lines 9-41).

13. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Conclusion

14. The following prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure:
- Horvitz et al. (U.S. Pub. No. 2004/0002932) discloses a multi-attribute specification of preferences about people, priorities and privacy for guiding messaging and communications.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to THOMAS MANSFIELD whose telephone number is (571)270-1904. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday 8:30 am-6 pm, alt. Fridays.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Bradley Bayat can be reached on 571-272-6704. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/T. M./
Examiner, Art Unit 3624

11 December 2008
Thomas Mansfield

/Bradley B Bayat/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3624